



DIGITAL EDITION

FEATURES INTERVIEWS

Uner on Acoustic-to-Digital Techno & His Dynamic Debut

By Ally Byers | May 12, 2014

In the world of techno, Spanish DJ/producer Uner has become a notable

He broke out in 2009 (collaborating with Coyu) on "Raw Sweat," a tight, groovy EP for Dynamic. Two years later, Uner scored another underground hit for the label with the deep, chugging "Bassboot" EP. With other impressive releases on Cadenza, Get Physical, Visionquest and 2020Vision, Uner earned the support of top global jocks like Luciano, Carl Cox and Laurent Garnier. And now he's back with his most impressive effort to date, TUNE432 (Dynamic), his full-length debut.

In a genre that incorporates machine samples and industrial-themed soundscapes, Uner's approach to techno stands at the other end of the sonic spectrum. The haunting melodies, unique drums and harmonic magic that flow through his tracks are all the result of acoustic instruments that have been put through Uner's scientific production workout. Get an earful of TUNE432 and you'll hear how.

We recently caught up with Uner (aka Manuel Garcia Guerra) before his show at Pacha London to discuss his approach to techno, his epic studio set-ups and making tracks on the move.

DJ Times: How did you start out?

Uner: I started out playing the piano when I was four-years old. Then, when I was 12, I began to listen to electronic music—I was drawn to producers making stuff with trumpets, strings, pianos. I loved the idea of playing electronic music with classical instruments. I began to really study jazz, amongst other things. My parents were musically minded, so they got a loan and bought me my first synthesizer.

DJ Times: How did the DJ transition happen?

Uner: I got further into electronic music when I began listening to Laurent Garnier. That was when I decided I wanted DJing to become part of my musical offering as well. At 15, I decided I wanted to go on tour, so my father and I began travelling around Spain in his van, going to gigs. People weren't sure what to make of a 15-year-old kid with all these drum machines and synthesizers on the early warm-up at clubs, less so because I needed a note from my parents to be allowed in! My first big DJ set was at Florida 135 [in Barcelona]. That was a departure from my normal sound, as the crowd at the time were into harder stuff. So I played Goa trance, hard techno, real psychedelic stuff. Eventually, the two met in the middle. By the time I was playing outside of Spain, I was DJing out my own stuff, and music that matched it, too. I'd dropped the live act at that point—travelling with all that kit was just too difficult.

DJ Times: It's interesting that techno or tech-house is famously machine driven—samples, loops, and so on—yet you've got a real acoustic feel to a lot of your work. What's brought that about?

Uner: For me, it's not about genre norms. I just love playing acoustic instruments. My primary intention is to make electronic music sound organic, sound human. So to do that you have to do stuff by hand, using acoustic basslines, acoustic instruments, percussion. Making this album

about how clubbers will receive this music and just focus in on your ideas further—hence, why the whole album is essentially an electronic soundtrack made with acoustic instruments.

DJ Times: You're seen as a kind of ambassador for Spanish electronic music, and you often talk of being inspired by your love of The Med. Would you play different music had you been brought up elsewhere?

Uner: Absolutely. Your surroundings will affect your creative ideas. I did the album travelling around the world. I was making tracks in Spain, New York, Berlin, London, in France. You can feel something different in each track. Everything around you—the accents, the food, the climate—shifts the way you think, and that has a subliminal effect when you sit down to start writing music.

DJ Times: Since 2011, you've been experimenting with the concept of a live show again. How would that work? What's the inspiration behind that?

Uner: I've always wanted to do a live show, and it's been on and off because I am still experimenting. The problem is, I want to do something massive, something really all-encompassing and different. But to do that you need a big budget, you need a team of travelling technicians, and flying all that kit—stage pieces, instruments, whatever—on planes is a nightmare for freight costs. I'm currently doing eight to 10 live shows a year when the situation allows for it, but one day I'd like to realize this much bigger concept. I'm consoled to the fact that my current live show is different in scale to my planned one, but in two or three years I'm going to give it a real shot.

DJ Times: Do you think the live act is the future for other producers?

Uner: I think so. When I played my live shows at 15, people had no idea what I was doing. They weren't sure how to take it. Now I pitch up to a club with all this kit, and the crowd get it—they like it. What with instruments and laptops being increasingly easy to plug and play, I think in five years or so, it'll be approaching the norm. Performers miss the spontaneity of a live show. Mixing tracks is great, but to be playing chords, to have that adrenaline, that nervousness that you're going to get some complicated sequence wrong, while playing to a packed room, it's just a massive, massive thrill. It's addictive. Even if part of that thrill currently involves occasionally having to re-boot your laptop!

DJ Times: At Pacha, we saw you play on Traktor with an iPad. What's your usual set-up?

Uner: At the moment, I play on Traktor and Ableton on the same laptop. I play the components of my own tracks on Ableton, and I play the rest on Traktor. One thing I've learned about live shows is that you need to have a good few hours of absolutely solid hits. If you're an emerging artist playing all your own stuff—let's be honest, not all of it will be brilliant—and that's going to compromise your set. So a good middle ground is playing your five or six bangers live, and the rest of your set like a normal DJ, using

DJ Times: So what's in this acoustic-to-digital studio of yours?

Uner: Oh man! [Laughs] Everything? I have shakers, congas, four different synths, one of which is an ancient monophonic that I love. I have an acoustic guitar, an electric lead and a bass guitar. I have some "freaky stuff" that I'm not even sure counts as instruments, just stuff that makes noises. Then I have two Apple towers, one PC and two laptops to do the conversion part. I have a rule that I try to bring one new instrument, and phase out an older instrument, from my studio each year. Oh, and finally, other producers always ask me about my claps in my tracks. I literally clap... my hands. That's always how it is.

DJ Times: Tell us about your 2013 European tour.

Uner: The last 18 months have been absolutely crazy. I've travelled every single week, two to three gigs a week. I was doing 18 gigs a month from last May to October. Sometimes I was like a child again. My tour manager would find me in bed saying, "No mum, I don't wanna go to school today!" and he'd be like "Dude, we're in Chicago...." But let's be honest—DJs are all children. We love to complain. The whole experience in reality was just super-nice. You're travelling, every night you're meeting new people, you're feeling new energies from new places, you're getting a range of emotions.

DJ Times: Now you've released your debut album. How did it all come together?

Uner: My goal was simple: I wanted to make 90-percent of the album outside my studio. As said, I'm a firm believer of the idea that being in different places leads to you making different music. Ever since I was a child, I'd been making so much of my music in my native Spain, in my hometown, in my studio, so to push myself, I had to get away. It was an enormous challenge, the toughest thing I've done, but I did it! I made tracks on the plane, on trains, in airports, in hotel rooms, in cities all over the world, backstage shortly before gigs. I fed on the different rhythms and energies around me.

DJ Times: It's got a lot of different styles, for sure. Some of it almost feels nu-disco-like, a departure from what you're known for.

Uner: It was just a sense of, let's make music, and see what happens. I had 22 tracks, which I whittled down to 13. Each track is connected harmonically to every other track—a DJ can mix these in any order and they'll sit perfectly. The whole thing feels like a diary of my life in the last year. I'm so happy with it.

[button_2 color="#ff0011" size="button-med" icon="none" text="Read More From This Issue"]

link="http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/ege1917d#/ege1917d/2"]

← **Previous Story**

Yeah Boy's Johnny Castro Talks
Parachute Youth, Dharrell & LIS

Next Story →

Teen Duo De\$ignated Usher in
New UK Bass Sounds

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE . . .

[Premiere] Alan Fitzpatrick & Reset Robot Join Forces Under The Alias of Customer For "Taxi Dance"

HYTE Announces Return To Governors Island Independence Day Weekend

PREMIERE: Clarian - 'Absence'

0 Comments

DJ Times Magazine

 Justin Enriquez ▾

 Recommend




 Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

 [Subscribe](#)  [Add Disqus to your site](#) [Add Disqus](#) [Add](#)  [Privacy](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[DIGITAL EDITIONS](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[MEDIA KIT](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

The first DJ-specific magazine to publish in the United States, DJ Times offers America's most comprehensive coverage of what pro DJs and aspiring professional DJs want and need.

LATEST NEWS

[Ultra Music Festival Acquires Winter Music Conference](#)

[Nastia, Ellen Allien & Peggy Gou at Miami Music Week](#)

[DJ Three, Daniel Bell, Doc Martin & More at Hallucienda Miami 2018](#)

[All Day I Dream of Southern Beaches at Miami Music Week](#)

[Winter Music Conference \(WMC\) Returns For 2018 Program](#)

MAGAZINE

[Customer Service](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Learn More](#)

© 2017 Testa Communications